Kleindienst for Free Speech

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The government's No. 2 law officer said yesterday that radicals are aggravating and irritating, but letting them "indulge in free speech is the best defense we have."

Deputy Attorney General Richard Kleindienst said the worst thing that could be done would be to create an atmosphere where radicals could not speak out.

"Overreaction to them now would do more to promote their cause, do more than anything else to help them," he told a conference of Illinois law enforcement officials arranged by Sen. Charles Percy.

Kleindienst added that, "I do not believe their rhetoric, language or numbers come anywhere near approaching danger to the institutions of this country or to overthrowing the government by force.

"Preaching is one thing and carrying it off is another."

"Free speech is the best thing for the radicals. We must make sure they can speak so everyone, including young people, can find out what they say is a lot of poppycock."

Kleindienst's remarks were in answer to a question from the conference floor as to what to do about radicals.